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Methodism as Old as the
Great Rebellion,
by a Curate, 1808.

Bishop of London

High Church

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PURITANISM REVIVED;

OR

METHODISM

AS OLD AS THE GREAT REBELLION.

IN A

SERIES OF LETTERS

FROM A CURATE TO HIS RECTOR.

" The Spirit of Enthusiasm is always the same, operating in much the same manner in all Sects and Professions of Religion, and discovering itself in similar peculiarities of notions and behaviour."

BISHOP LAVINGTON.

And here our Authors make a doubt,
Whether he were more wise or stout :
Some hold the one, and some the other ;
But, howsoe'er they make a pother,
The difference was so small, his brain
Outweigh'd his rage but half a grain :
Which made some take him for a Tool
That Knaves do work with, call'd a Fool.

BUTLER.

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LETTER I.



VARIETY OF SECTS. MUTUAL DISAGREEMENTS.



MY DEAR SIR,

YOU may remember, that when you favoured me with a call a few days ago, you found me reading Grey's edition of Hudibras; and I observed to you, that having accidentally taken up the poem, my attention had been arrested by the many resemblances that struck me, between the sectaries of Butler's days, and those of our own. I have since amused myself with examining those resemblances somewhat more closely, as well as my few books upon the subject enable me: and I have thought it might afford some entertainment to you, as well as to myself, if I were to send you the result of my examination. I shall accordingly take the liberty of doing so in this and some following letters; in which I ought perhaps to apprise you, that you are not to expect any fresh information. Even the general resemblance between the Puritans

B

and

and the Methodists has been repeatedly noticed ; I am not however aware that they have hitherto been compared in the various particulars, in which it will be my present object to point out their resemblance.

It is a trite remark, that every blessing is liable to abuse. No stronger exemplification of it can be found, than the licentiousness, which accompanied the religious liberty, introduced by the Reformation. Being released from tyranny, men thought proper to release themselves from law ; and all “ went a-whoring after their own inventions.”

Religion spawn'd a various rout
Of petulant capricious sects,
The maggots of corrupted texts,

as we have it in Hudibras * : and Dr. Grey remarks, that “ never were there so many different “ sects and religions as were then in England.” One preacher, whom he quotes, told the parliament, in a thanksgiving sermon, “ That there were no less “ than an hundred and fourscore several heresies “ propagated and spread in London :” and another observed, “ That in the little town of Reading, he “ was verily persuaded, if Augustin's and Epiphanius's catalogues of heresies were lost, and all “ other ancient and modern records of that kind,

* Part III. Canto i. Verse 8.

“ yet

“ yet it would be no hard matter to restore them
 “ with considerable enlargements from that place *.”

The remark of Dr. Grey I fear to be equally, if not still more just, as applied to the present time. To the “ Anabaptists, Familists, Socinians, Pelagians, Ranters, and what not” of the puritanical age, many of which are still in force amongst us, may be added the Wesleyans, Whitefieldians, Revivalists, New-itinerants, Swedenborgians, Zinzendorfians, Jumpers, Swadlers, and what not of the methodistical age. London is now, as heretofore, the hot-bed of these prolific maggots: Reading, if I mistake not, would supply as copious a catalogue of heretics and schismatics: and the late Bishop of Sarum had reason to be satisfied, that “ the Babel of Sectarism” was erected in his time, as well as formerly, at no great distance from Salisbury plain †.

VARIOUS as these sects are in name, they are no less AT VARIANCE WITH EACH OTHER in their tenets.

“ They were at that time,” says Dr. Grey ‡,
 “ much of the temper and disposition of those
 “ Disciplinarians in Queen Elizabeth’s days; four

* Part I. Canto ii. 485.

† See Note on Hudibras, III. ii. 8.

‡ Ib. I. i. 210.

“ classes of whom complained to the Lord Burleigh,
 “ the Lord Treasurer, against the Liturgy then in
 “ use. He enquired, whether they would have it
 “ quite taken away? They said, No. He ordered
 “ them to make a better. The first classis made
 “ one agreeable to the Genevan form: this the
 “ second disliked, and corrected in six hundred
 “ particulars: that had the misfortune to be quar-
 “ relled at by the third classis: and what the third
 “ resolved on was found fault with by the fourth.
 “ And it is observed of Queen Elizabeth, that she
 “ was often heard to say, that she knew very well
 “ what would content the Catholics, but that she
 “ never could learn what would content the Pu-
 “ ritans.”

With the Catholics of the present day I have
 nothing to do; but I believe that George the Third
 might be as much puzzled to know what would con-
 tent the Methodists.

I have met with many persons, I believe them to
 be very numerous, who confound the Methodists in
 general, as if they were but one body: little aware
 of their being divided and subdivided into sects, as
 much at variance with each other, in their own
 estimation, as light and darkness, or as angels and
 devils.

Not

Not to insist on more trivial discrepancies between less celebrated leaders, we find the two great founders of the two great divisions of Methodism “accusing each other of preaching “damnable and essentially erroneous doctrines, “horrid blasphemies, another gospel, &c.*” To be more particular, Mr. Whitefield told Mr. John Wesley, that “they preached two different gospels, “and therefore he not only would not join with “or give him the right hand of fellowship, but “was resolved publicly to preach against him “and his brother, wheresoever he preached at “all †.” And Mr. Wesley declared, that “he “had an immediate call from God to preach and “publish to the world, that Mr. Whitefield’s doctrine was highly injurious to Christ ‡.” I would observe by the way, that Mr. Myles, in his Chronological History of the Methodists, speaking of this dissention, says, “some warm expressions “dropt from them towards each other §.” Such is the faithful representation of a partizan!

This however is by no means the only important dissention among the Methodists. Among the fol-

* See the Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared, Part II. Pref. p. xxi.

† Dr. Coke’s Life of Wesley, p. 214.

‡ Nott’s Bampton Lectures, p. 248. n.

§ P. 11.

lowers of Wesley in particular, who, you know, adhere to the opinions of Arminius in opposition to the gloomy doctrines of Calvin, espoused by Whitefield, there have arisen numerous disputes, especially concerning the administration of the sacraments; service in church hours; the nature and exercise of religious liberty; and the forms of Church government. These disputes have led to partial separations, and the formation of societies independent of each other. And, as a proof that these disputes are not considered by themselves as of ordinary importance, we are informed by an author, who was several years in the connexion as a preacher, that in one particular instance, “the parties abused each other without shame and without mercy;” and that the controversy was conducted with “such a spirit of rancour and hatred as the religious world has seldom seen *.”

Upon occasion of this disturbance among that community of real Christians the Methodists, their historian discovers that schism is an awful thing †! A reflection, which does not appear to strike either him or his brethren, on occasion of their separation from the established Church. “Such a separation,” that I may use the words of Mr. Wesley ‡,

* Nightingale's Portraiture of Methodism, p. 481.

† Myles's Chron. Hist. p. 186.

‡ Life, by Hampson, vol. II. p. 216.

“ they

“ they do not imagine to be any sin at all. They
 “ leave a Christian society with as much uncon-
 “ cern as they go out of **one** room into another.
 “ They give occasion to all this complicated
 “ mischief, and wipe their mouth, and say they
 “ have done no evil.”

Resemblances to their forerunners occur to me, where I little expected to find them. “ After a
 “ most lamentable schim,” said a Presbyterian Minister, about the year 1690, “ of above forty
 “ years continuance, it pleased God at last to
 “ touch the hearts of the Godly Ministers of the
 “ Presbyterian and Independent persuasion, with
 “ a deep sense of this great evil in separating so
 “ long the one from the other *.” So it is that a
 conscience can be at the same time both tender and
 callous ! So it is that men can strain at a gnat, and
 swallow a camel !

Believe me,

My dear Sir,

Very faithfully your's.

July 29, 1808.

* Preface to Hudibras, p. xii.

LETTER II.

UNION AGAINST THE CHURCH. DEVOTION TO
THEIR OWN CAUSE.

MY DEAR SIR,

MY former letter contained some instances of the dissensions of Methodists, one with another. But however widely differing on other subjects, whether of discipline or of doctrine, there is one, upon which I apprehend that ALL DESCRIPTIONS, whether Wesleyans or Whitefieldians, whether New-itinerants or Revivalists, together with almost all other descriptions of modern Sectaries, ARE very generally AGREED.

One of the commentators on Hudibras remarks *,
 “ It might be asked how it comes to pass, that the
 “ Knight makes choice of a Squire of different
 “ principles from his own ; and why the Poet afterwards says,

* I. i. 457.

“ Never

“ Never did trusty Squire with Knight,
 “ Or Knight with Squire, e’er jump more right ;
 “ Their arms and equipage did fit,
 “ As well as virtues, part, and wit,”

“ when there is so manifest a disagreement in the
 “ principal part of their character? To which it
 “ may be answered, That the end they proposed
 “ by those adventures was the same, and though
 “ they differed about circumstantial, THEY AGREED
 “ TO UNITE THEIR FORCES AGAINST THE ESTA-
 “ BLISHED RELIGION. The Poet, by this piece
 “ of management, intended to show the joint con-
 “ currence of Sectaries against all law and order
 “ at that time.”

This is one among several passages, wherein,
 had the Commentator lived at this time, I should
 have supposed him to have the Sectaries of this
 time in his eye. The following statement is equally
 alarming on account of the view which it gives both
 of their numbers and of their union. “ By this
 “ calculation of the different bodies, into which
 “ the Methodists are divided,” (I understand the
 calculation to be made exclusively of the Wesleyan
 Methodists) “ it appears that their effective force,
 “ regular and volunteer, is about seven hundred
 “ thousand strong! Saying nothing of their allies,
 “ of various descriptions, both in the Church, and
 “ among the evangelical Dissenters, who all belong

“ more or less to the same body, or compose what
 “ has been called, I hope improperly, THE COM-
 “ BINED ARMIES AGAINST THE CHURCH OF
 “ ENGLAND *.”

The general statement at the end of the foregoing extract is corroborated (if corroboration be necessary) by a passage, which I shall next lay before you from another author: whose opinion, with respect to the force of the Whitefieldian Methodists in particular, compared with the followers of Wesley, will doubtless appear to deserve your attention.

“ It is well known, that Whitefield and Wesley
 “ differed about the Calvinistic points. Hence they
 “ became each the head of a different party,
 “ though they are all known by the general name
 “ of Methodists. Of these the followers of White-
 “ field, who are more or less inclined to Calvinism,
 “ far exceed in point of numbers their brethren in
 “ separation, the Arminian Methodists. They are
 “ again subdivided among themselves; and it is
 “ hardly possible to mark with accuracy the shades
 “ of difference, which distinguish one congregation
 “ from another. IN ONE RESPECT THEY ARE
 “ UNITED; THAT OF DISSENTING FROM THE
 “ ESTABLISHED CHURCH †.”

* Nightingale's Port. of Meth. 470.

† Orthodox Churchman's Magazine, vol. VI. p. 351.

Now if these calculations are to be relied on, they present us with a body of enemies, under the sole denomination of Methodists, amounting to a sum not much short of one million and a half. I confess I suspect some mistake in one or both of the statements. However, that the numbers are very formidable there cannot be a doubt: nor do I think it more questionable, that they are united, not merely in *dissenting from*, but in *opposing*, the Established Church *.

And

* Since writing the above, I have requested to be informed on what authority the Editor of the O. C. Magazine made the statement, mentioned in the text, as to the Calvinistic Methodists exceeding the Arminians in number; and whether it is to be understood as referring to that calculation, which makes the Arminians 250,000; or that which increases them to 500,000, or 700,000. That gentleman has replied to my request in a very handsome manner, by informing me, that "he has paid considerable attention to the progress of the Methodists; and he is fully of opinion, from his own observation, and the result of various inquiries, that the proportion of Calvinistic Methodists is to the Wesleyan as Three to One, on the fullest estimate of the latter." A proportion this, which raises the Calvinistic Methodists to a sum exceeding two millions in England and Wales: and makes the aggregate of the adherents of Methodism little short of Three Millions of souls; or more than one fourth of the population of the country!

To the above communication are subjoined the following interesting particulars, for which my readers, as well as myself, will, I doubt not, feel themselves obliged to the gentleman,

And indeed they have good reason to be united in their exertions, if the CAUSE, in which they are equipped,

man, to whose liberal attention to my application I am much indebted. " In the metropolis the Wesleyans have no more
 " than six or seven Meeting-houses, three of which only are
 " of a capacious size: whereas the Calvinistical Methodists
 " have no less than sixteen, the principal part of which are
 " very large and crowded. Besides these, many small conventicles are opened in various parts, where, though the
 " preachers affect to be Independents, they are in truth Methodists. Many also of the old Dissenting places of worship
 " have sunk into Methodism of this division; and have
 " preachers, who are not acknowledged by the regular board
 " of Dissenters. In fact, with the exception of those, who
 " are Baptists, Arians, or Socinians, the greater part of the
 " Dissenting Congregations are not to be distinguished from
 " the Methodists, and usually they are provided with Teachers
 " from Hoxton or Cheshunt Seminaries, which are notoriously
 " methodistical.

" In addition to all these nurseries of Calvinistical Methodism, it deserves serious consideration, that the Churches
 " and Chapels possessed by those Clergymen, who arrogate to
 " themselves the exclusive titles of Evangelical and Gospel
 " Preachers, are powerful auxiliaries in the same cause. Of
 " these there are at least twelve in this metropolis: and it is
 " well known that in none of them will any person be suffered
 " to officiate, who is not one of the fraternity. Hence it is
 " that the strain and manner of preaching in these places
 " disposes many to go to the avowed Methodistical Conventions: and the noted Coal-heaver, who is followed by
 " thousands, has made it a boast frequently, that the best
 " part of his Congregation were prepared for him by Father
 " Romaine. This also has been observed and dwelt upon
 " with

equipped, (it matters not with what discordant principles) be the cause of God ; and that, against which they are arrayed, be the cause of the devil.

Such was the language of old : and such it is now.

In Charles the First's time a puritan Minister told his congregation from the pulpit, " That they
 " ought to contribute, and pray, and do all they
 " were able to bring in their brethren of Scotland
 " for settling of GOD'S CAUSE. I say, quoth he,
 " this is God's cause; and if our God has any
 " cause, this is it: and if this be not God's cause,
 " then God is no God for me, but the Devil is got
 " up into heaven †."

" with pleasure, by that arch-schismatic Haweis, in his
 " Church History, where he accounts for the increase of Cal-
 " vinistical Methodists and Conventicles, by the popularity of
 " the Evangelical Clergy, from the hearing of whom numbers
 " go off and join other congregations.

" The reason why the Wesleyans appear so formidable, is
 " the exact stated account published by them : and from the
 " last report of their Conference, it certainly is evident, that
 " their increase and strength must give serious ground for ap-
 " prehension. The Calvinistical Methodists have no Con-
 " ference ; nor do they publish any statement of their numbers
 " and progress. But from the Evangelical Magazine and
 " other authorities it is clear, that their progress is more
 " alarming. In and about the metropolis they abound : and
 " they have penetrated, and are still penetrating, into the
 " obscurest towns and villages of the kingdom."

† Hud. I. i. 736.

Such

Such blasphemous expressions, my dear Sir, are too shocking for the eye or ear of a sober-minded Christian: but I fear you will find their parallel in the language of some of our pious Sectaries.

I forbear to dwell on the menace of a certain Methodist Preacher; who, indignant at being refused a participation in the Lord's Supper, thus vented his resentment against the Minister, "My God will scourge you for this, or he is no God *." I rather refer you to the great founders of the sects, Messrs. Whitefield and Wesley, who may very fairly be considered to have given the tone to the sentiments of their disciples, and whose arrogant opinion of the CAUSE, in which they are engaged, does not sink below that of their forerunner quoted above. Mr. Whitefield, for instance, not only asserts his conviction, that "his cause is the cause of civil and religious liberty †;" "the blessed cause, the cause of God's ark, &c ‡."; but pronounces that "all Morality set up in opposition to his, shall sink with its professors into hell §:" and Mr. Wesley not only says "it is plain to him" that the whole work of God termed Methodism,

* Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. Part III. page 17.

† Nott's Bamp. Lectures, p. 294.

‡ Remarks on a Pamphlet intituled The Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. p. 36.

§ Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. II. 117.

“ is an extraordinary dispensation of his Providence*,” and describes “ Methodism as the “ only Religion worthy of God †,” like his brother Puritan, who explained the God of Jacob in the Psalms to mean “ the God of the Puritans ‡;” but “ dispatches all mankind to hell, as far as lies in “ human power, who are not Methodists §.” “ Not those in general,” according to Bishop Lavington’s animadversion, “ as they would pretend, “ who are void of a due love of God and man, “ who believe not in Christ, and keep not his commandments, and promote not repentance and reformation: but all who submit not to their “ special dispensation of Methodism. They are “ inspired, taught of God, sent by God, upon “ God’s errand, to make a tender of his last offers, “ his last call to a guilty world. All their opposers “ are labouring heartily in the cause of hell. “ Those, who hinder people from joining them, “ or would bring them back, are most inexcusable: “ they are blasphemers; openly fight against God; “ fight under the devil’s banner; are taking part with “ the devil against God. Those, who have gone out “ from them, and left them, are said to return to their “ vomit again; are called apostates; are two-fold

* Myles’s Hist. of Method. p. 90.

† Nott, p. 226.

‡ Hud. III. ii. 819.

§ Enthusiasm, &c. II. 117.

“ more

“ more the children of hell, than before.” Nay, we find by their own representations, a plentiful collection of which you will meet with in Bp. Lavington’s work just cited, that the Devil himself is actively and personally engaged in resisting their exertions and supporting the cause of their enemies: a case not without parallel in the days of Puritanism, when a celebrated divine declared, that “ an eminent Church-living was possessed by “ a blasphemer, in whose house he believed some “ of his hearers could testify, that the Devil was “ as visibly familiar as any one of the family *.”

Under these circumstances, the activity of the Methodists against the Establishment can hardly be matter of wonder. If the leaders of the sects be sincere in the above persuasions, as was the case with their founders, we may call them, and with reason enough, enthusiasts and fanatics; but their very enthusiasm and fanaticism will be the keenest incentive to their exertions. If they be not sincere, and only hypocritically make religion a stalking-horse for the compassing of their temporal ends, no more convenient instrument can be found than the operation of these persuasions on the minds of their followers. Of this latter description of leaders, at least, there cannot exist a doubt, that, as the old song says,

* Hudibras, I. ii. 485.

They’d

They'd pluck down the King, the Church, and the Laws,
 To set up an idol, they nickname the Cause,
 Like Bel and the Dragon, to gorge their own maws *.

And generally there is too much reason to fear
 and believe, that, however different from the original
 object of the first founders of Methodism,
 the overthrow of our religious Establishment, and
 therewith by necessary consequence of our civil
 constitution, forms at present the real cause of our
 modern, as it did of our elder, Schismatics.

I remain

Your's, &c.

* Hud. I. i. 736.

LETTER III.

PRETENDED ATTACHMENT TO THE CHURCH OF
ENGLAND. REASONS OF THIS PRETENCE IN
THE FOUNDERS. BREACH OF ENGAGEMENTS.

MY DEAR SIR,

WITH some of the Methodists, their hostility to the national Church is open and avowed: whilst others hypocritically PRETEND AN ATTACHMENT to her, although they have in many instances separated from her communion, and are really and practically her enemies. Others again attend her services, and affect to join with her members in praying to be delivered from schism; and their next step is to the conventicle, where they unite with her adversaries in a schismatical worship.

Both Whitefield indeed and the Wesleys appear desirous of being considered adherents to the Church; but with what little reason may be seen very satisfactorily set forth in Nott's third
Bampton

Bampton Lecture; in which their separation, and especially that of John Wesley, is distinctly proved by several schismatical actions; particularly by his garbling and mutilating the liturgy and articles; by his establishing a new independent religious community; and most of all by his assuming episcopal authority, and taking on himself to ordain.

The case however is too notorious to be insisted on at length; with respect either to the original founders, or to the subsequent disciples of Methodism. Whether they profess attachment, or avow hostility, they are for the most part equally hostile in reality; and I think that you will approve the sentence delivered by a writer, formerly of their body; who, having described the alarm felt by Mr. Wesley, on learning that many of the Methodists wished to erect themselves into a body distinct from the Church of England, from which he had never avowed his dissent, makes the following pertinent observations: "The fact is, the Methodists were
 " already practical Dissenters: and it was but
 " honest in the Society at Cork, and all the inge-
 " nuous preachers, to avow their dissent at once.
 " It was Mr. Wesley himself, who was cutting
 " and shuffling between the Church of England
 " and the Protestant Dissenters; and not those
 " societies, which determined to act an honest
 " open part, by leaving the Church, whose rubric
 " they

“ they had broken, and whose ritual they had in
 “ a great measure discarded. How the Methodists
 “ of the present day can persist in calling them-
 “ selves members of the Church of England, I
 “ cannot tell. When will they lay aside their
 “ double dealing *?”

How they can so persist is a question, which any honest rational man may well decline answering. They thus compel us to adopt the pathetic expostulation of the Psalmist, “ It is not an open enemy, that hath done me this dishonour, for then I could have borne it. Neither was it mine adversary that did magnify himself against me; for then peradventure I would have hid myself from him. But it was even thou, my companion, my guide, and mine own familiar friend. We took sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God, as friends.”

Such double-dealing may serve to remind us again of their prototypes, who “ in all their wars against the king, maintained still that they fought for him; pretending to distinguish his Political, from his Natural, Person †:” with what sincerity too fatally appeared, when together

* Nightingale's Portraiture, &c. p. 343.

† Hudibras, I. ii. 514.

with the person of the King, they threw down the Monarchy itself.

There stood Hypocrisy with holy leer,
Soft-smiling, and demurely looking down,
But hid the dagger underneath the gown*.

Inconsistent as this conduct was in the Founders of Methodism, it may not be difficult to ACCOUNT FOR THEIR PROFESSED ATTACHMENT TO THE NATIONAL CHURCH, although engaged in hostilities against it. They had entered into covenant with it at two or three several times; and they could not estrange themselves without violating a voluntary, solemn, and repeated engagement.

This engagement however they did violate with as much assurance, and they justified their violation of it with as much confidence, as the equivocators in the Great Rebellion.

They bound themselves to “ give their faithful diligence, always so to minister the doctrine and sacraments and discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and realm hath received the same † :” and agreeably to this obligation, they “ received authority from the Bishop to preach the word of God, and to minister the

* Dryden’s Palamon and Arcite,

† Ordination Service.

“ sacraments *in the congregation, where they should be lawfully appointed thereunto**.” But they spurned all limitation as to congregations: for Mr. Wesley “ looked upon all the world as his parish; this was the work which he knew God had called him to †:” and “ God shewed Mr. Whitefield that it was his duty not to fix in any particular place ‡.”

They subscribed to an express declaration, that they “ *would use the form* prescribed in the book of Common Prayer in public Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and *none other* §.” But they repeatedly acted in opposition to this engagement, both partially and altogether; sometimes adopting the form in a mutilated state, and sometimes rejecting it intirely: Mr. Wesley declaring that “ for this schism,” (if it must have the name,) “ he was chearfully ready to answer at the bar of God ¶:” and Mr. Whitefield, acknowledging his practice to be contrary to the laws of the Church of England, but affirming, that “ when Canons are invented and compiled by men of little hearts and bigotted principles, on purpose to hinder persons of more

* Ordination Service.

† Life by Coke, p. 190.

‡ Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. 126.

§ 36th Canon.

¶ Life by Hampson, II. 189.

“ enlarged

“enlarged souls from doing good, like the withes
 “with which the Philistines bound Sampson, in his
 “opinion, they may very legally be broken*.” And
 again: “As for all those, as one expresses it
 “who are for clipping the wings of the mystic
 “dove, and for confining the power and Spirit of
 “God within the bounds of human establishment,
 “(though useful in their place, as far as they
 “can reach), I am well aware of what opposition
 “I must continue to meet with in that quarter.
 “But blessed be God! there are some few amongst
 “us, that are men of greater latitude, who can
 “think and dare speak more worthily of God’s
 “sovereignty, and acknowledge a work to be his,
 “though it be not according to the exact measure
 “of Canonical fitness†.”

They promised “*reverently to obey their ordi-*
 “*nary and other chief Ministers*, unto whom was
 “committed the charge and government over
 “them‡.” But they flew in the face of all epis-
 copal jurisdiction. Mr. Whitefield, rejecting all
 subordination, and although but a presbyter, as-
 suming the dignity of a primate, declares, “If a
 “Bishop commit a fault, I will tell him of it§:”

* Nott’s Bampton Lect. 276.

† Letter to the Author on Enthusiasm, &c. p. 47.

‡ Ordination Service.

§ Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. II. 126.

and Mr. Wesley, the other self-commissioned Apostle, putting in practice the menace of his rival, and addressing a letter to a Bishop, whom he so far reverences as to subscribe himself, "his Lordship's dutiful son and servant," gives an example of his sense of duty, by roundly accusing his Lordship of extreme cruelty, disingenuousness, and persecution*.

It is not in my power to reconcile these gross breaches of their engagements with their frequent protestations, that in committing them they were actuated by God: which in my simple apprehension appears adding to the guilt of perjury that of blasphemy, by making God the author of sin.

In a general view, as I hinted before, we have their counterparts in the rebellious Puritans. "They rest secure," says Bishop Sanderson, "absolving themselves from all guilt and fear of perjury; and think they have excellently provided for themselves and consciences; if, during the act of swearing, they can make shift to defend themselves, either as the Jesuits do, with some equivocation or mental reservation; or by forcing upon the words some subtle interpretation; or after they are sworn, they can find some loophole, or artificial evasion; whereby such art may be used

* Life by Coke, p. 500.

“ with the oath, that the words remaining, the
 “ meaning may be eluded with sophism, and the
 “ sense utterly lost *.”

All this is very convenient, where it is wanted. With some persons however no such loopholes are necessary. It is but to affirm boldly, that God hath commanded them to violate their engagement, as in the instances above-mentioned; or, as in the case of Mr. Whitefield, when some one remonstrated with him on his breaking á promise made to Mr. Wesley, to say, “ that such a promise was
 “ only an effect of human weakness, and that he
 “ was now of another mind †.”

I remain

Your's, &c.

* Hudibras, II. ii. 58

† Coke's Life of Wesley, p. 214.

LETTER IV.

ABUSE OF THE REGULAR CLERGY.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HOPE I did not go out of my way to dwell a little on the example, set by the Founders of Methodism to their followers, of adherence to their promises and engagements: agreeable as it is, on a general view, to the practice of their fore-runners. I proceed at present to their antipathy to the national religious establishment, inherited from their puritanical predecessors, and openly professed by our modern sectaries in language of the same character.

One of the most effectual methods of disparaging a religion is THE DISPARAGEMENT OF ITS MINISTERS. Accordingly London, in Charles's days, "sent forth its furious scum in multitudes, to cry down Bishops, root and branch. Good Lord," says a contemporary writer, what a deal of dirt
" was

“ was thrown in the Bishops’ faces! what infamous
 “ ballads were sung! what a thick cloud of epide-
 “ mical hatred hung suddenly over them, so far
 “ that a dog with a black and white face was called
 “ a Bishop *.” In another place we are told,
 “ They frequently called the Clergy of the estab-
 “ lished Church, Dogs. A member of parliament
 “ in his speech called them dumb dogs, that cannot
 “ speak a word for God. A preacher in his sermon
 “ called them dumb dogs and greedy dogs. Pre-
 “ lacy was a whelp; and the public Prayers of the
 “ Church, The blind whelps of an ignorant de-
 “ votion †.”

This you must allow is sufficiently gross: but we can at least match it from our own charitable Secretaries.

Mr. Whitefield, by profession a son, and by duty a supporter of the Church, describes her under the figures of Jericho, whose towering walls he prophesies will soon fall down: of Babylon, of which he hopes ere long to hear, that “ it is fallen, it is fallen:” of the dragon engaged in war with Michael, the emblem I suppose of his heavenly angelic sect ‡. With him the Clergy of the establishment are “ wolves in sheep’s cloathing; blind

* Hudibras, I. ii. 531.

† Ib. 957.

‡ See Nott, p. 214, n.

“ leaders

“ leaders of the blind ; Canaanites and carnal
 “ teachers ; nor can he die in peace without bearing
 “ testimony against the unchristian principles and
 “ practices of those priests of Baal, the generality
 “ of our Clergy *.” With Mr. Wesley, and Mr.
 Wesley’s Bishop, Dr. Coke, who esteem “ the union
 “ which subsists between Church and State Anti-
 “ christian,” the national Clergy are “ hirelings,
 “ wicked and corrupt in doctrine and practice ;
 “ parasites, and bottle-companions of the rich and
 “ great †.” With another preacher, they are
 “ destitute of divine grace, and every ministerial
 “ qualification ‡.” With another, “ Episcopacy is
 “ a tyrannical corporation, and its ministers an
 “ army of hireling priests §.” With another they
 are “ Scribes and Pharisees ; persecutors, perhaps
 “ murderers ; traitors as Judas, and corrupt both
 “ in principle and practice, as the scarlet whore of
 “ Babylon ||.”

Such is the language, which some of the leaders
 of the Sects have not thought themselves disgraced
 by using in print : the language of some of the
 commoner sort among them I apprehend to be at

* Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. II. 125.

† Hampson’s Life of Wesley, II. 181, &c.

‡ Nott, p. 344.

§ Ib. p. 108.

|| Enthusiasm, &c. I. 17.

least not more temperate in the pulpit and in private conversation. That such language, my dear Sir, whether in Charles's or in George's days; whether from a Puritan or a Methodist; whether from the press, in the senate, from the pulpit, or in the intercourse of private life, is sufficiently disgraceful, no one (I presume) will dispute: but surely it is infinitely more disgraceful to the employers, than to the subjects, of it.

Upon this point I beg leave to submit to you the sensible and charitable remarks of a Dissenter. "It is necessary," he says, "to make one or two remarks on the intemperate conduct of some of the Methodist Preachers, in pointing out the errors of the Clergy. We may ask, Who made these Methodists judges in Israel? Who gave them authority to abuse, in public and private, the character of a body of men, whose learning, piety, and morality are in a great degree the honour of our island? Although myself a Dissenter, I am constrained to acknowledge, that the great bulk of our national learning is to be found among the Clergy of the establishment. In the practice of morality in general, what body of men in the world exceeds that of the regular Clergy of this kingdom? I am persuaded, not any. Pray, who are the great promoters of those public charities, those learned and beneficent institutions,

"stitutions, which are at once the glory, the hap-
 "piness and the bulwark of our country? Not the
 "Methodists; but the Bishops and Clergy of the
 "established Church. Were they to withdraw
 "their patronage and support from every charitable
 "institution in the kingdom, the widow's heart,
 "that now sings for joy, would droop within her:
 "the poor, now raised by their munificence and
 "public spirit, would fall to rise no more. Let us
 "only look at the lists of names, which are printed
 "with the periodical reports of almost every lite-
 "rary and charitable institution of the kingdom,
 "and we shall find this feeble testimony to the
 "worth of our national Clergy confirmed in the
 "amplest manner. Considered as a body, they
 "are doubtless the ornaments of the religion they
 "teach, and of the country that supports them.
 "And shall a few mistaken Methodist Preachers
 "take upon them, without censure, to vilify these
 "men as dumb dogs; as unenlightened, worldly,
 "unregenerate, unconverted sinners, without hope,
 "and without God in the world? Is it to be tole-
 "rated that because the regular Clergy are dis-
 "posed to act soberly in their public ministration,
 "and to read their discourses, instead of pouring
 "out upon the people a heap of crude undigested
 "extemporaneous matter, that therefore they shall
 "be considered as blind leaders of the blind*."

* Nightingale's Portraiture, p. 376.

Having

Having then broadly re-stated his opinion, that in the judgment of Methodists those Clergymen, who do not preach extempore, are looked upon as unevangelical, unconverted, unenlightened men, the same writer continues: " I am aware that the praise
 " I have here bestowed on the Ministers of our
 " Church must be given with some painful exceptions: that pluralists and non-residents do still
 " disgrace the establishment: and that some of the
 " Clergy are immoral men, regardless of the flock,
 " while they secure the fleece: but I repeat it with
 " pleasure, the bulk of the Clergy is composed of
 " men of profound learning, sincere piety, and extensive liberality. I should be sorry to see these
 " men removed from their livings to make room
 " for their calumniators. I should be sorry to see
 " our ecclesiastical establishment reduced to that
 " state of barbarism, from which it has long been
 " emerging. * * * * At any rate such serio-comic-
 " episcopo-dissenting Clergymen as the Author of
 " the Sale of Curates *, are not the men to reform
 " the Church, but rather to augment the number
 " of her blemishes, and to re-barbarize her Ministers and supporters. Under their hands she
 " will be

" Worse for mending—wash'd to fouler stains."

* I believe Rowland Hill is the person here intended.

Hoping

Hoping this liberal testimony will be some relief
from the uncharitable anathemas of our accusers,

I remain

Your's, &c.

LETTER V.

ON THE SCHISMATICAL PREACHERS.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE quotation at the conclusion of my last Letter, which, from the charity and good sense it contains, will not (I hope) have appeared tedious to you, naturally leads us, my dear Sir, to consider, WHO ARE THE PREACHERS that are set up in opposition to the "dumb dogs" and "blind leaders" of the Church of England.

And here I by no means wish to insinuate that there are not pious, discreet, and learned men among the Methodist Preachers; although I confess that one or other of these qualities appears very questionable either in men, if there be now
any

any such, who desert the Church of which they have undertaken to be faithful ministers, and place themselves at the head of a schism, the natural tendency of which is her overthrow; or in others, of whom I suppose the great majority of their preachers to consist, who enjoy not the fruits of a polite and liberal education, which, as we shall presently see, they despise.

Of many of these we may be content to take a general description from one of Dr. Grey's notes on the Puritans. "MECHANICS of all forts were
 " then Preachers; and some of them much fol-
 " lowed and admired by the Mob. I am to tell
 " thee, Christian Reader, says an author in the
 " year 1645, this new year of new changes
 " never heard of in former times: namely, of
 " stables turned into temples, (and I will beg
 " leave to add temples turned into stables, as was
 " that of St. Paul's and many more :) stalls into
 " quires, shop-boards into communion tables, tubs
 " into pulpits, aprons into linen ephods, and
 " Mechanics of the lowest rank into Priests of
 " the High Places.—I wonder that our door-posts
 " and walls sweat not, upon which such notes
 " as these have been lately affixed: On such a day
 " such a Brewer's Clerk exerciseth, such a Taylor
 " expoundeth, such a Waterman teacheth.—If
 " Cooks, instead of mincing their meat, fall upon
 " dividing

“ dividing of the word; if Taylors leap up from
 “ the Shop-board into the Pulpit, and patch up
 “ sermons out of stolen shreds; if of the lowest
 “ of the people, as in Jeroboam’s time, Priests are
 “ consecrated to the most High God; do we
 “ marvel to see such confusion in the Church as
 “ there is *?”

He adds, that they are humourously girded in a
 tract intitled, *The Reformado*, precisely character’d
 by a modern Church-warden. “ Here are Felt-
 “ makers, who can roundly deal with the block-
 “ heads and neutral dimicasters of the world:
 “ Cobblers, who can give good rules for upright
 “ walking, and handle scripture to a bristle: Coach-
 “ men, who know how to lash the beastly enormi-
 “ ties, and curb the headstrong insolences of this
 “ brutish age, stoutly exhorting us to stand up for
 “ the truth, lest the wheel of destruction roundly
 “ over-run us. We have Weavers, that can sweetly
 “ inform us of the shittle swiftness of the times,
 “ and practically tread out the vicissitude of all
 “ sublunary things, till the web of our life be cut
 “ off; and here are mechanics of my profession,
 “ who can separate the pieces of salvation from
 “ those of damnation, measure out every man’s
 “ portion, and cut it out by a thread, substantially

* Hud. I. ii. 436.

“ pressing

“ pressing the points, till they have fashionably
 “ filled up their work with a well-bottomed con-
 “ clusion.”

He afterwards mentions a tract, published in proof of this scandalous practice, as he terms it, intitled, “ The Pulpit guided by seventeen Arguments, 1651, occasioned by a dispute at Henley, Warwickshire, August 20th, 1650, against Laurence Williams, a Nailer, Publick Preacher; Tho. Palmer, a Baker, Publick Preacher; Tho. Hind, a Plough-wright, Publick Preacher; Henry Oake, a Weaver, Publick Preacher; Hum. Rogers, late a Baker’s Boy, Publick Preacher.

“ God keep the land from such translators,
 “ From Preaching Cobblers, Pulpit Praters,
 “ Of order and allegiance haters *.”

Such were the Puritan Reformers. Not much authority is necessary for stating a notorious fact, that many of the Methodist Reformers and Publick Preachers, are of the same and similar orders with the above. “ Hence,” says Bp. Lavington, following up some animadversions on their rejection of legitimate subordination, “ hence they take
 “ upon them, I do not say to ordain, but to ap-
 “ point and give authority to persons, who (in their
 “ own words) are neither Bishops, Priests, nor

* Hud. I. ii. 436.

“ Deacons, to preach the word. Common Me-
 “ chanics, Women, and Boys are actually em-
 “ ployed in this ministry of publick preaching,
 “ without any human qualifications. Mr. Wesley
 “ says, We cannot but own, that God gave wisdom
 “ from above to these unlearned and ignorant
 “ men ; so that the work of the Lord prospered in
 “ their hands. But (continues the Bishop) it re-
 “ quires no extraordinary gift of discerning the
 “ Spirits to see, how easily such persons, by means
 “ of proper discipline, learning the cant of the
 “ party, a tolerable good assurance, and fluency of
 “ words, may set up for Circumforaneous Holders-
 “ forth ; and (what in fact is true) make no scruple
 “ of making their boast of being inspired ; thereby
 “ collecting a maintenance, and chousing the igno-
 “ rant of their money *.”

One powerful engine, the force of which they
 have most successfully tried, is ITINERANCY : an
 engine, with which also their forerunners appear to
 have had some acquaintance. “ April 12, 1649.
 “ It was referred to a Committee to consider of a
 “ way how to raise pensions and allowances out of
 “ Dean and Chapter’s lands, to maintain SUPER-
 “ NUMERARY MINISTERS, who should be autho-
 “ rized to go up and down, compassing the earth,

* Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. II. 126.

“ and

“ and *adulterating other men's pulpits and congregations.*

“ Hugh Peters recommended, That two or three
 “ Itinerary Preachers might be sent by the state
 “ into every county: and a Committee of godly
 “ men of honesty, holiness, and parts, to all coun-
 “ ties, recommended from their test *.”

The Methodists themselves, I believe, do not pretend to have derived their tag-rag and bob-tail ministry from these godly men, the saints of other days; who could turn their hands to any thing, from a needle to a halberd; and

“ Were free of every spiritual order,

“ To preach, and fight, and pray, and murder †.”

Rather, as you are well aware, they justify themselves for their extravagance by the example of Paul the Tent-maker, and Peter the Fisherman: thereby adopting, what I trust may without presumption be termed, the folly and arrogance of one of their founders, who defended his mode of conduct, by representing Itinerancy, as he practised it, to be the good old apostolical way of evangelising; and by calling our Blessed Lord and his Apostles, Itinerants, Field-Preachers, Preachers to Mobs and Rabbles ‡.

* Hud. III. ii. 92.

† I 117.

‡ See Nott's Bamp. Lectures, p. 275, n.

Mr. Whitefield would hardly have expected to find a parallel to this profaneness in such a man, as one of the French Revolutionists, who conceived that he was giving a sanction to the enormities of the revolution by alleging, That Jesus Christ was a good Republican.

Your's, &c.

P. S. In a quotation contained in the body of the foregoing letter, mention is made of Women being employed in the ministry of Publick Preaching.

The Women were zealous contributors to the Good Cause in former times *: and it is to the fair sex in general, especially to "Elect Ladies and "Honourable Women †," that Methodism has been much indebted for its support. WOMEN PREACHERS however are (I believe) an anomaly, I venture to add an unscriptural anomaly; of which Puritanism does not furnish an example. But they had the sanction of the Apostle of Methodism ‡, (and, as Dr. Coke *most justly* argues on another occasion, what HE determines, ought not to be investigated, but complied with § !) and the sect has not been of

* Hud. II, ii. 775.

† Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. III, 193.

‡ Myles's Hist. p. 90.

§ See Hampson II, 207.

late destitute of ornaments of that description. Mr. Nightingale tells us of a preaching Sister, who “made numerous proselytes. She had a wonderful “knack at inflaming the passions, but was extraordinarily defective in the art of informing the “judgment*.” And the Orthodox Churchman is so scandalous as to give an account of another Itinerant Preacher of the fair sex, in the western counties, a few years since, who was greatly followed; and who, after levying handsome contributions upon the credulous, proved with child by a gifted brother †!

LETTER VI.

CONDUCT IN THE PULPIT.

MY DEAR SIR,

BEFORE I proceed to certain peculiarities of the Methodists in point of opinions, doctrines, manners, and the like; I would touch upon their remarkable BEHAVIOUR IN THE PULPIT,

* P. 456.

† Magazine for Feb. 1807.

which, in the case of the Puritans, you will recollect, is made the subject of ridicule in some of the most celebrated verses in Hudibras, or perhaps in our language :

“ When Gospel Trumpeter surrounded
 “ With long-ear’d rout to battle sounded,
 “ And Pulpit, drum ecclesiastic,
 “ Was beat with fists instead of a stick *.”

In the note on the former part of this passage, we are told, that “ the Presbyterians preached the
 “ people into Rebellion ; incited them to take up
 “ arms and fight the Lord’s battles, and destroy
 “ the Amalekites, root and branch, hip and thigh ;
 “ and to root out the wicked from the earth ; that
 “ was, in their sense, all that lov’d the King, the
 “ Bishops, and the Common Prayer. And it has
 “ been fully made out, that many of the Regicides
 “ were drawn into the Grand Rebellion by the
 “ direful imprecations of seditious preachers from
 “ the pulpit.”

I am not aware that the Methodists meddle much with mere temporal politics in the pulpit. But surely the declaration of Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke, that the connection between the Church and the State is an antichristian union, bespeaks the loyal subject as little as the faithful churchman. And

* I. i. 9.

when we consider the invectives of many of their followers against the Church, which is a part of the constitution, and against the Bishops, who are a part of the legislature, of the country, their harangues may be reasonably affirmed to be making no slight approach towards sedition.

This by the way. What I have rather in view is the satire in the second couplet of the foregoing quotation: "which alludes to the vehement action
 " of the Puritans in the pulpit, and their beating
 " it with fists as if they were beating a drum.
 " The author of a character of England observes,
 " that they had the action of a thrasher rather
 " than of a divine. And it is remarked of John
 " Sedgwick, that he thrashed such a sweating
 " lecture, that he put off his doublet."—By the
 bye, Mr. Whitefield was very fond of what he
 termed a good pulpit sweat. "And of another
 " person, That he shrunk up his shoulders, and
 " stretched himself as if he was going to cleave a
 " bullock's head *."

Add to these particulars the turning up of the whites of the eyes, and the whine twanged dexterously through the nose, and you have a picture of foolish fanaticism, unrivalled save in the people thus described by one lately of their body.

* Note, *ibid.*

“ Many of the brethren still assume an air of
 “ importance while in the pulpit, and have many
 “ fantastic attitudes : being still afflicted with that
 “ species of paralysis, termed St. Vitus’s dance ; as
 “ is evident from their queer noddings, ridiculous
 “ stoopings and erections of the body, skipping
 “ from one side to the other of the desk, knitting
 “ their brows, with other theatrical and foppish
 “ airs. Yea, many do still flourish their handker-
 “ chiefs, and gaze about upon the congregation,
 “ before they begin their work. They still whisper
 “ in the beginning of their prayer ; storm and
 “ bellow in the middle ; and scream towards the
 “ end : always however losing their fervour, when
 “ they come to repeat the Lord’s Prayer *.”

What conduct indeed is to be expected from the
 more ignorant preachers, when they have such a
 sanction for theatrical mummary in the behaviour
 of their superiors, as is conveyed in the following
 narrative ? “ At the fifty-sixth Conference, held at
 “ Manchester, in 1799, I was present, when Mr.
 “ Samuel Bradburn, being president, preached the
 “ Conference Sermon, from these words in the 2d.
 “ and 3d. verses of the 126th Psalm. ‘ Then said
 “ they among the heathen, The Lord hath done
 “ great things for them. The Lord hath done great

* Nightingale’s Portraiture, p. 255.

“ things

“ things for us; whereof we are glad.’ After the
 “ worthy President had discharged his pious viru-
 “ lence against the Kilhamites, who had separated
 “ from the connexion, he called upon every preacher
 “ present, who was still determined to be on the
 “ Lord’s side, to signify that determination by then
 “ publicly rising from his seat. As Mr. Brad-
 “ burn pronounced the word of command, he sud-
 “ denly clapped his hands; and in the same mo-
 “ ment the preachers, being placed in the front
 “ seats of the gallery, and other conspicuous parts
 “ of the chapel, rose up as one man! They con-
 “ tinued on their feet a few seconds—the Presi-
 “ dent was silent—the most rapturous sensations
 “ and enthusiastic ardour were diffused throughout
 “ the whole congregation—some nearly fainting
 “ with delight, fell back in ecstasies; others loudly
 “ exclaimed, ‘ Glory be to God! Glory be to
 “ God!’ and had not the chief actor in this scene
 “ interposed, by requesting the brethren to sit down,
 “ I am confident there had been no more occasion
 “ for the preacher that day *.”

Agreeable to this vehemence of gesture and de-
 portment is the language of their sermons. “ They
 “ scare their audience with some shocking expres-
 “ sions, as that Hell flashes in their faces; that

* Nightingale’s Portraiture, p. 310.

“ Satan

“ Satan stands ready to snatch them away ; and
 “ then they repeat three or four times with a pecu-
 “ liar tone, damned, damned, damned * !” The
 object and effect of which is to produce (as Dr.
 South strongly expresses it) “ such a controuling
 “ horror upon the spirits” of their hearers, as was
 excited by “ the direful imprecations” of the
 preachers in the Rebellion †.

Mr. Nightingale however remarks that the
 Wesleyan Preachers “ do not always preach so as
 “ to inspire their hearers with terror and alarm.
 “ They often fall into the contrary extreme ; and
 “ keep the congregation in a constant titter during
 “ the whole sermon. They abound in witty sayings,
 “ smart repartees, and laughable anecdotes. Some
 “ of them are little inferior in these respects to
 “ those merry preachers, who so powerfully ex-
 “ cited the risibility of the Puritans during the
 “ reign of that profligate monarch, Charles II, and
 “ the hypocritical Protector, Oliver Cromwell ‡.”

It seems however from what he adds, that the
 resemblance in this particular holds good less ge-
 nerally among the Wesleyan Methodists, “ among
 “ whom the practice of spiritual jesting and pious

* Nott's Bamp. Lect. p. 326, n.

† Hud. I. i. 9.

‡ P. 260

“ punning

“ punning is fast going to decline. Upon the
 “ whole, the Wesleyan preachers seem to be trans-
 “ ferring their wit to their Calvinistic brethren,
 “ who, with the boisterous and intolerant joker of
 “ Surry chapel at their head, are drawing thousands
 “ to their meetings by holy mirth and devout jocu-
 “ larity*.”

They preach, you know, without notes. This practice was first introduced upon a casual emergency by Mr. Wesley †; as was also that of extemporary prayer, that preaching to God, as some one calls it, derived from the Puritans, and greatly encouraged among the Methodists, “ whose constant
 “ language is that God’s people is a praying
 “ people; and one of their charges against the
 “ established Clergy, that they are destitute of
 “ divine grace and every ministerial qualification,
 “ because they have neither the gift of prayer
 “ nor preaching ‡”.

How liable these pretended gifts are to abuse, and how much they have been, and are abused, I need not remind you: nor indeed is it to my purpose. I will venture however to go a little out of my way, in the hope of amusing you with an anecdote,

* Hud. p. 261.

† Myles’s Hist. p. 3, 4.

‡ Quoted by Nott, Bampton. Lect. p. 344.

dote, which proves, if proof be necessary, how absurd preaching may be made in the hands of such ignorant practitioners.

A Methodist preacher took for his text that passage in 2 Kings, iv. 38. "Set on the great pot," which he allegorised something in this manner. The pot itself is the church: the meat in the pot is the word of God: and the broth the grace of God! After having enlarged on these several heads, the preacher in imagination and gesture turned the pot upside down, and from the circumstance of its having three feet, placed in a triangular direction, took occasion thence to demonstrate the mystery of the Holy Trinity*.

I remain, &c.

P. S. As it is nearly connected with the anecdote at the end of my letter, I would just remark in this place, that the mixing of awful and sacred images with those that are common and familiar, has a natural tendency to lower and depreciate the former. Of this error both of our sets of enthusiasts are guilty. It was in the same spirit of absurdity, that a celebrated Preacher of the Puritans, wishing to encourage his hearers to a liberal contribution, upon administering the Sacrament, ad-

* Nightingale's Portraiture, p. 258.

dressed

dressed them in this manner: "All ye that have
 " contributed to the Parliament, come and take
 " this Sacrament to your comfort*": —and that a
 Sister in the gospel, lately wishing to recommend
 a Margate hoy, "set on foot for the accommoda-
 " tion of religious characters," addresses herself to
 " those among the followers of a crucified Re-
 " deemer, who are in the habit of visiting the Isle
 " of Thanet in the summer, persuaded that they
 " will think themselves bound to patronise and en-
 " courage an undertaking, that has the honour of
 " the dear Redeemer for its professed object†."

LETTER VII.

IGNORANCE AND BIGOTRY. ANTIPATHY TO HUMAN LEARNING.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE Pulpit-peculiarities of the Methodists
 are what might naturally be expected in men of

* Hud. I. ii. 582.

† Quoted from the Evangelical Magazine in the Edinburgh
 Review, No. XXII.

coarse and uncultivated minds, such as we have seen to be many of their preachers. I proceed to another peculiarity (common, if I may so say, to the Puritans) which is also a result of their want of a liberal education.

You will understand me to allude to their **IGNORANCE** and **BIGOTRY**, which I couple together, because I believe they are in nature so closely connected, as hardly to admit of separation.

“ The greatest Bigots,” as is remarked in a note on *Hudibras* *, “ are usually persons of the shallowest judgment, as it was in those wicked times, when women and the meanest mechanics became zealous sticklers for controversies, which none of them could be supposed to understand. An ingenious Italian of Queen Elizabeth’s days, gave this character of the Disciplinarians their predecessors: That the common people were wiser than the wisest of his nation ; for here the very women and shop-keepers were able to judge of predestination, and what laws were fit to be made concerning Church Government ; and then, what were fit to be obeyed or demolished : that they were more able (or at least thought so) to raise and determine perplexed cases of conscience than the most

* I. i. s.

“ learned

“ learned colleges of Italy : that men of slightest
 “ learning, or at least the most ignorant of the
 “ common people, were mad for a *new*, or a *super*,
 “ or a *re-reformation* of religion.”

The “ at least thought so ” is a characteristic well suited to our sectaries, whose ignorance in general is, I believe, extreme.

Of many of the Preachers, Mr. Nightingale, who from his connection with them had ample means of procuring information, and whose statement appears highly probable, gives the following character. “ Mr. Wesley saw numbers added to
 “ his societies wherever they went ; but he knew
 “ they were men of no education, having been
 “ taken from the meanest and most common occupations, to become ministers of the gospel. Their
 “ abilities, as Methodist Preachers, were certainly
 “ great. Considered in any other capacity, than
 “ as tradesmen, labourers, mechanics, and Methodists, their talents were quite moderate * * * .
 “ That the early preachers were men of very
 “ scanty literary attainments, will admit of no
 “ doubt : and it is to be feared, that the plan of
 “ instruction, which Mr. Wesley laid down for
 “ their improvement, was not very likely to expand
 “ their views beyond the sphere of their own notions in theology, or their favourite prejudices in
 “ politics,

“ politics. Indeed as to general politics, the Methodists have never, as a body, known any thing about the matter*.”

You will please to observe, my dear Sir, that even this feeble testimony applies to the most informed alone among the Methodist Preachers : and not to such men, as the independent, who being asked why he called himself an independent, answered, because he preached faith independent of works : or as he, who to the same question replied, I am an independent, because I depend upon my Bible : or as that other illiterate apostle, who, being questioned how he and his brother, who had obtained licences for preaching the gospel, would be able to go through their office, whereas neither of them could read, replied, Mother reads, and we spounds and splines.

The last fact I give you on the authority of the Orthodox Churchman's Magazine † ; and you will perhaps be edified, if I copy a couple more, not indeed quite so good, from a letter communicated by another correspondent to that useful publication. “ My friend and customer, Mr. David Hinley, of the Sessions House, Clerkenwell, told me, that

* Portraiture of Methodism, p. 325.

† Vol. xix. p. 138.

“ a big coarse-looking man, whom he verily be-
 “ lieved to be a coal-heaver, came one day to
 “ swear and declare: and when he was to subscribe
 “ his name, he seemed disconcerted, and at last
 “ confessed that he could not write.—A friend of
 “ mine told me that he was present at a meeting of
 “ the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge,
 “ in Bartlett’s Buildings, one day, when another
 “ customer of mine, Dr. Glasse, venerable for
 “ his years, and respectable both as a clergyman
 “ and a magistrate, came into the Society’s room,
 “ and said that he had just come from Clerkenwell,
 “ and had seen the words *teacher* and *preacher*,
 “ spelt by a number of men, who had been to
 “ take the oaths, in such a variety of ways, and
 “ with such distorted orthography, that he thought
 “ all the members then present, above forty, could
 “ not fabricate another variation.”

This ignorance of our fanatics, proud as we
 shall soon have occasion to notice, of their spiritual
 illuminations, was of old, and is now, attended
 by a CONTEMPT AND HATRED OF LEARNING;
 as unequivocal a proof as can be given of a bigotted
 and contracted mind.

“ Know you,” said the self-denominated Saints
 of the Rebellion, “ that Logic and philosophy, in
 “ which you are better versed than in the Word of

“ God, are not inventions or institutions of Jesus
 “ Christ and his Apostles, but of the Devil and
 “ Antichrist: with which they have mainly and
 “ principally upheld their black, dark, and wicked
 “ kingdom*.”

“ All learning,” says Dr. South, “ was then
 “ cried down, so that with them, the best Preachers
 “ were such as could not read, and the best
 “ Divines such as could not write. In all their
 “ Preachments, they so highly pretended to the
 “ Spirit, that some of them could hardly spell a
 “ letter: for to be blind with them was a proper
 “ qualification of a spiritual guide, and to be
 “ book-learn’d, as they called it, and to be irre-
 “ ligious, were almost terms convertible: so that
 “ none were thought fit for the Ministry but
 “ Tradesmen and Mechanics, because none else
 “ were allowed to have the Spirit: and those only
 “ were accounted like St. Paul, who could work
 “ with their hands, and in a literal sense drive the
 “ nail home; and be able to make a pulpit, before
 “ they preached in it. Latin unto them was a
 “ mortal crime: and Greek, instead of being
 “ owned to be the language of the Holy Ghost,
 “ (as in the New Testament it is) was looked upon
 “ as the sin against it: so that in a word, they had

* Hudibras I. i. 65.

“ all the confusion of Babel among them, without
 “ the diversity of tongues *.”

Things thus appear to have been carried to a strange pass : but I know not whether farther than at present, as we may judge from the following passage, which amounts to much the same thing as the more highly-coloured picture of the witty Preacher above. “ The great bulk of Methodists to this day,” says Mr. Nightingale, “ have a sort
 “ of dread of human learning. The preachers
 “ may raise an outcry against this charge ; but it is
 “ nevertheless just, as every one, who has been at
 “ all conversant with the private manners of this
 “ people, must acknowledge. The majority of Methodists, notwithstanding the present much improved and refined state of the connection, are
 “ still to be sought for among persons of the lowest
 “ ranks of life ; and these have nearly as strong
 “ an aversion to what they call head-knowledge,
 “ as any of their brethren in the life time of Mr. Wesley. A local Preacher, whom I know, was
 “ a few years ago forbidden to preach at one of the
 “ places in his circuit, because he spoke rather
 “ better English than did the rest of his fellow-labourers in the same place †.”

* Hudibras, I. iii. 1337.

† Portraiture, p. 327.

Nor is this antipathy to learning a mere quiescent quality, but it has been known to break forth into actions of gross extravagance. Mr. Nott, who notices the recent re-publication of a sermon circulated among the schismatics in the time of the rebellion, on the sufficiency of the Spirit's teaching without human learning, supplies me with a memorable example of this fanatical antipathy in a Methodist Preacher in America: "who issued a Proclamation, to bring to him such books as he thought fit to prohibit, and among the rest the Whole Duty of Man, and Bishop Beveridge's private Thoughts on Religion. This was accordingly done: and a vast heap of them was committed to the flames on a Sunday evening, the miserably-deluded people singing Hallelujah, and declaring that the smoke of the torments of such authors of all those books as died in the same belief as when they wrote them, was now ascending in hell, in like manner as they saw the smoke of those books*."

An instance of stupid fanaticism this, putting the presumption of it out of the question, exceeding that of the Tinkers, Taylors, &c., that governed Chelmsford at the beginning of the Rebellion, who were of opinion "that Learning had always been

* Bamp. Lect. p. 332. n.

“ an enemy to the Gospel, and that it were a
 “ happy thing, if there were no Universities, and
 “ if all Books were burned, except the Bible*.”

We'll down with all the Versities
 Where Learning is profest,
 Because they practice and maintain
 The language of the Beast.
 We'll drive the Doctors out of doors,
 And Parts whate'er they be,
 We'll cry Parts and Learning down,
 And heigh then up go we.

I remain, &c.

LETTER VIII.

PRETENSIONS TO INSPIRATION—PROPHETICAL GIFTS.

MY DEAR SIR,

INSTEAD of human learning, that
 “ cobweb of the brain,” as Squire Ralpho calls it,
 which, as we have seen, they scout, our Methodists

* Hudibras, I. iii. 1339.

pride themselves on INSPIRATION ; to which, like the Puritans, they are great pretenders : though, like them also, many of them I doubt not are “ as ignorant of what they call the inward light, as that woman, who requested a certain Priest to put for her in his Mass a half-penny worth or five farthings worth of the Holy Ghost *.”

“ The Independents and Anabaptists,” says Dr. Grey, “ pretended to great Gifts, as they called them, by Inspiration ; and their preachers, though they could scarce read, were called Gifted Brethren †.”

“ Where,” demands Bishop Lavington, speaking of the Methodists, “ where will these bold Enthusiasts stop ? For we find them next taking a flight to heaven, and stealing thence the sacred light and fire, in order to compass effectually their own and other’s delusion. Nothing less than Inspirations, Revelations, Illuminations, and all the extraordinary and immediate actions of all the Persons in the sacred Trinity will serve their turn. So that now every flash of zeal and devotion ; every wild pretension, scheme, tenet, and over-bearing dictate ; impulses, impressions, feelings, impetuous transports and raptures ; intoxicating vapours and fumes of imagination ; phan-

* Hudibras, I. i. 579.

† Ib. 481.

“toms of a crazy brain, and uncouth effects of a
 “distempered mind or body; their sleeping or
 “waking dreams; their actions and passions, &c.;
 “all are ascribed, with an amazing presumption, to
 “the extraordinary interposition of heaven, setting
 “its seal to their mission. In short, whatever they
 “think, say, or do, is from God; and whatever
 “opposeth and stands in their way, is from the
 “devil *.”

For a detailed proof of this heavy charge, I refer you to the work, from which it is extracted. In the mean time, having stated generally the agreement between the Puritans and the Methodists in their pretensions to divine Gifts, I venture to specify two or three important particulars, in which their respective pretensions agree.

The first I shall notice is their claim to PROPHE-
 TICAL GIFTS.

“The rebellious Clergy,” says Dr. Grey, “would
 “in their prayers pretend to foretell things, to en-
 “courage people in their rebellion. I meet with
 “the following instance in the Prayers of Mr.
 “George Swathe, Minister of Denham, in Suffolk.
 “O my good Lord God, I praise thee for dis-
 “covering the last week in the day-time a vision:

* Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. I. 49.

“that

“ that there were two great armies about York,
 “ one of the malignant party about the King; the
 “ other party, Parliament and Professors: and the
 “ better side should have help from heaven against
 “ the worst: about or at which instant of time we
 “ heard the soldiers at York had raised up a
 “ sconce against Hull, intending to plant fifteen
 “ pieces against Hull; against which fort Sir John
 “ Hotham, Keeper of Hull, by a garrison, dis-
 “ charged four great ordnance, and broke down
 “ their sconce, and killed divers cavaliers in it.—
 “ Lord, I praise thee for discovering this victory
 “ at the instant of time that it was done, to my
 “ wife; which did then presently confirm her
 “ drooping heart, which the last week had been de-
 “ jected three or four days, and no arguments
 “ could comfort her against the dangerous times
 “ approaching: but when she had prayed to be
 “ established in Faith in Thee, then presently thou
 “ didst by this vision strongly possess her soul, that
 “ thine and our enemies should be overcome *.”

The Methodists of the present day affect to have
 supernatural notices of subsequent events; and that
 not without examples in their founders, notwith-
 standing a remark, which I lately read in the Edin-
 burgh Review, that they did not pretend to the
 prophetic character †.

* Hudibras, I. i. 573.

† No. xxii. p. 360.

With

With respect to the early Methodists, you will find instances in the Bishop of Exeter's work, from which I extract the following.

"The Lord," says Mr. Whitefield, "revealed himself to a child about seven years old, in an amazing manner, in a rapture; and by the uncommon earnestness of the Spirit gave her to wrestle for the Churches: she thought that an uncommon work would be wrought upon the earth." (He means the propagation of their Schism.) "Many such instances of the out-pouring of the Spirit we have among us *."

Messrs. Wesley and Whitefield frequently prophesied in general terms about the success of their preaching, &c. sometimes they descended to particulars. Mr. Wesley says, "For some time I had visited a soldier in prison every day. But I told him, Do not expect to see me any more; I believe Satan will separate us for a season. Accordingly, the next day I was informed, that the Commanding Officer had given strict orders, that neither Mr. Wesley, nor any of his people, should be admitted †." Mr. Whitefield has a prophetic notice of a future conversation with a Lord, and of his money jingling in his hand. "God," he says, "was pleased to give me previous

* Enthusiasm, &c. II. 41.

† Ib. 40.

" notice

“ notice of it. I dreamed that I was talking with
 “ his Lordship, and that he gave me some gold,
 “ which seemed to sound again in my hands.
 “ Afterwards he made me a present of five guineas,
 “ which did sound again in my hands *.”

Similar notices were also vouchsafed to others. Mr. Wesley says, “ I was sent for to Kingswood, “ to one of those who were so ill before. A violent “ rain began, just as I set out. The woman, then “ three miles off, cried out, Yonder comes Wesley, “ galloping as fast as he can †.” The woman, it seems was possessed. Mr. Wesley, addressing himself to Satan, said, “ I command thee, in the “ name of Jesus, to tell me, if thou hast commis- “ sion to torment any other soul. It was imme- “ diately answered, ‘ I have : L—y C—r and S—h “ J—s ;’ two who lived at some distance, and were “ then in perfect health. This was on Saturday.” But he goes on. “ On Sunday in the evening, “ I called at Mrs. J—’s in Kingswood. S—h “ J—s and L—y C—r were there. It was scarce “ a quarter of an hour before L—y C—r fell into a “ strange agony ; and presently after S—h J—s.”

This narrative affords abundant food for speculation : I quote it on a count of the prophecies it contains. A case of much the same kind in that

* Enthusiasm, &c. II. 39.

† Ib. III. 55.

respect occurs soon after. Speaking of another woman possessed, Mr. Wesley says, " All the next
 " day she was in a violent agony : till starting up
 " in the evening she said, ' Now they have done.
 " They have just done. C— prayed, and Hum-
 " phreys preached.' (And indeed so they did.)
 " ' And they are coming hither as fast as they can.'
 " Quickly after they came in *."

Much more might easily be added. But these instances may be sufficient to show the pretensions of the early Methodists to supernatural knowledge. There is however one story of so remarkable a kind, quoted from Mr. Wesley by one of his biographers, that I cannot do otherwise than introduce it.

" A little before the conclusion of the late war
 " in Flanders, one who came from thence gave us
 " a very strange relation. I knew not what judg-
 " ment to form of this, but waited till John Haim
 " should come over, of whose veracity I could no
 " more doubt, than of his understanding. The
 " account he gave was this. Jonathan Pyrah
 " was a member of our society in Flanders. I
 " knew him some years, and knew him to be a
 " man of unblameable character. One day he was
 " summoned to appear before the board of general

* Enthusiasm, &c. III. 63.

" officers.

“ officers. One of them said, what is this that we
 “ hear of you? We hear that you are turned pro-
 “ phet, and that you foretel the downfall of the
 “ bloody house of Bourbon, and the haughty house
 “ of Austria. We should be glad if you were a
 “ real prophet, and if your prophecies came true.
 “ But what sign do you give to convince us you
 “ are so, and that your predictions will come to
 “ pass? He readily answered, Gentlemen, I give
 “ you a sign. To-morrow, at twelve o’clock, you
 “ shall have such a storm of thunder and lightning,
 “ as you never had before, since you came into
 “ Flanders. I give you a second sign: as little as
 “ any of you expect any such thing, as little ap-
 “ pearance of it as there is now, you shall have a
 “ general engagement with the French within three
 “ days. I give you a third sign: I shall be ordered
 “ to advance in the first line. If I am a false pro-
 “ phet, I shall be shot dead at the first discharge.
 “ But if I am a true prophet, I shall only receive
 “ a musket ball in the calf of my left leg. At
 “ twelve the next day, there was such thunder and
 “ lightning as they never had in Flanders. On the
 “ third day, contrary to all expectation, was the
 “ general battle of Fontenoy. He was ordered to
 “ advance in the first line. And at the very first
 “ discharge, he did receive a musket ball in the
 “ calf of his left leg *.”

* Hampson’s Life of Wesley, II. 140.

Such is the narrative given by Mr. Wesley; whose account of the latter end of this Methodist illuminé is not what we might have expected to hear of one, so highly favoured as we are intended to suppose him to have been. “And yet all this
 “ (he adds) profited him nothing, either for temporal or eternal happiness. When the war was
 “ over, he returned to England: but the story was
 “ got before him: in consequence of which he was
 “ sent for by the Countess of St—s, (Mr. Hampson
 “ supposes Stairs,) and several other persons of
 “ quality, who were desirous of hearing so surprising an account from his own mouth. He
 “ could not bear so much honour. It quite turned
 “ his brain. In a little time he went stark mad:
 “ and so he continues to this day, living still, as I
 “ apprehend, on Webley Moor Side, within a few
 “ miles of Leeds.” I do not recollect that the visions of Isaiah and Daniel and the other holy men of God, were attended or followed by insanity.

The gift is not yet withdrawn, as appears from the intimate knowledge which Mr. Thomas Cook was accustomed to display of his friend S. B.
 “ Whenever he met me in the street, his salutations
 “ used to be, Have you free and lively intercourse
 “ with God to-day? Are you giving your whole
 “ heart to God? I have known him on such occasions speak in so pertinent a manner, that I have
 been

“ been astonished at his knowledge of my state.
 “ Meeting me one morning, he said, I have been
 “ praying for you : you have had a sore conflict,
 “ though all is well now. At another time he
 “ asked, Have you been much exercised these few
 “ days? for I have been led to pray that you might
 “ especially have suffering grace *.”

The following is perhaps still more in point.
 “ Some time after I first joined the society of Me-
 “ thodists, I was induced, after a thousand inward
 “ conflicts, which affected my health not a little, to
 “ yield to the pressing solicitations of some of the
 “ brethren, and to try my powers of extemporaneous
 “ effusion, before a very crowded audience : but not
 “ succeeding exactly as I wished, (though some of
 “ my friends told me it was only the pride of nature
 “ and the temptations of the devil) I resolved to
 “ make no farther attempts ; until some time after,
 “ I went to hear a Mr. Thomas Wood, one of the
 “ travelling preachers, who assured me, in the
 “ presence of two or three others, that a few nights
 “ prior to his having seen me for the first time, at
 “ the preaching, he had dreamed, that a young
 “ man of my name had lately been converted to
 “ God among the Methodists ; that this young man

* Extract from the Methodist Magazine for 1807, in the
 22d No. of the Edinburgh Review.

“ was

“ was possessed of considerable talents ; had, be-
 “ fore his conversion, been led to entertain some
 “ very erroneous opinions ; and that he was become
 “ a preacher of the gospel !—This appeared very
 “ extraordinary ; and what seemed to me to con-
 “ firm the truth of Mr. Wood’s statement, was his
 “ actually calling me by my name, and appearing
 “ to know my person, although I was certain he
 “ could never before have seen me ; and he de-
 “ clared that no one had told him my name *.”
 And so the bait took. In one instance indeed, we
 are told, Mr. Wood’s dream was particularly de-
 fective, for it spoke of “ a young man possessing
 “ very considerable talents :” “ in every other re-
 “ spect his ramblings of fancy were tolerably cor-
 “ rect :” “ Mr. Wood was a man of some learning
 “ and unimpeachable integrity :” the young man,
 “ who had formerly entertained a very strong pre-
 “ judice against the truth of Christianity,” was con-
 vinced by this more powerful testimony to his call ;
 and, although his friends might have repeated their
 caution, that it was only the pride of nature and
 the temptation of the devil, soon became a Me-
 thodist Preacher.

Mr. Nightingale believes in this vision. I must
 say to me, it appears extremely questionable. And

* Nightingale’s Portraiture, p. 276.

did not Mr. Wood's unimpeachable integrity stand in the way, I confess I should suspect that he had made use of his learning; and, having taken upon him to play the part of Sidrophel, did not fail to provide himself with a Whachum.

Your's, &c.

LETTER IX.

MIRACULOUS ATTESTATIONS.

MY DEAR SIR,

MY last letter showed the pretensions of our Sectaries to supernatural knowledge. SUPERNATURAL POWER also has been exerted (if you will believe their assertions) in the cause of each.

Speaking of the struggle between the established Church for the liturgy, and the sectaries for extemporaneous prayer, Mr. Nott remarks, that "The schismatics in the time of the Rebellion carried their bigotry on this point so far, as to assert that in repeated instances the Almighty
" had

“ had miraculously punished, nay, that he had
 “ smitten with death such ministers, as attempted
 “ to defend or use the offices of the Church of
 “ England *.”

Two or three instances of JUDICIAL MIRACLES,
 directed against the opposers of the Methodists,
 may serve as a counterpart to the above.

“ A Person, who had been zealous for the
 “ Church, and had declared that Mr. Wesley’s pre-
 “ tensions were delusion, is of a sudden superna-
 “ turally seized with agonies both of body and of
 “ mind. Mr. Wesley says, I came in; and he
 “ cried out, Let all the world see the just judgment
 “ of God. He immediately fixed his eyes upon
 “ me, and stretching out his hand, cried, Aye,
 “ this is he, who I said was a deceiver of the
 “ people: but God has overtaken me, &c †.” And
 again, “ Mr. S. was prosecuted for having ex-
 “ pelled a person from the communion. What
 “ was the event? says Mr. Wesley. He, who
 “ alone was willing and able to espouse the cause,
 “ took it into his hand; and before the day, when
 “ it should have been tried here, called the Plaintiff
 “ to answer at an higher bar ‡.”

* Bampton Lect. p. 148.

† Ib. 227. n.

‡ Ib. 230. n.

This persuasion, that Providence interferes in an especial manner for the punishment of their opposers, appears to be still prevalent among them. A late writer, giving an account of a division in the society, which occasioned the expulsion of one of their preachers, insinuates that that person soon after died by the particular judgment of heaven*.

A more striking instance perhaps is the narrative of what befel an innkeeper, who was destroyed for having appointed a cock-fight at the very time that the service was beginning at the Methodist chapel. I quote the narrative as extracted in the 22d Number of the Edinburgh Review from the Methodist Magazine for 1807. "Never mind," says the innkeeper; "I'll get a greater congregation than the Methodist parson: we'll have a cock-fight. But what is man! how insignificant his designs, how impotent his strength, how ill-fated his plans, when opposed to that Being, who is infinite in wisdom, boundless in power, terrible in judgment, and who frequently reverses and suddenly renders abortive the projects of the wicked! A few days after the avowal of his intention, the innkeeper sickened, &c. &c. And then the narrator goes on to state, that his corpse was carried by the meeting house, on the day

* Myles's Hist. p. 184. Nightingale's Portraiture, p. 474.

“ and exactly at the time, the deceased had fixed
“ for the cock-fight.”

It seems however that Providence does not interfere solely for the punishment of those who oppose the progress of Methodism : but that extraordinary means were also adopted to rebuke the first promoters, who were not sufficiently active in advancing it. “ The next day,” says Mr. Wesley, “ March 11th, we dined at Birmingham ; and, soon
“ after we left it, were reprov'd for our negligence
“ there (in letting those who attended us go without
“ either exhortation or instruction) by a severe
“ shower of hail * !”

The last example is almost as silly, as the preceding are shocking. I might amuse you by a variety of cases, some of them ludicrous enough, wherein Providence is supposed to have interfered, simply for their benefit, without any display of vengeance on their enemies. This however would be taking us too far out of our way, and leaving our friends the Puritans in the lurch. I will therefore detain you no longer on this subject, than while I report one instance of the miraculous care of heaven, vouchsafed to Mr. Wesley, for the sake of the remark, that shall follow.

* Life by Hampson, I. 206.

Mr. Wesley, you know, experienced some very unwarrantable and outrageous treatment from mobs at different times; and once more especially in Staffordshire, during an assault, the particulars of which you will find detailed by himself in his life by Dr. Coke *. He concludes his narrative with this declaration. " This evening I received two
 " blows : but both were as nothing. For though
 " one man struck me on the breast with all his
 " might, and the other on the mouth with such a
 " force, that the blood gushed out immediately, I
 " felt no more pain from either of the blows, than
 " if they had touched me with a straw."

Such is the statement of Mr. Wesley. The remark to which I alluded is from Mr. Nightingale, who, notwithstanding some questionable observations in his book, is for the most part a judicious and candid writer.

Mr. Wesley, he says, " had several hair-breadth
 " escapes, sometimes from one danger, and some-
 " times from another : but chiefly, I believe, from
 " the fury and bigotry of enraged and encouraged
 " mobs. The Methodists love to dwell on these
 " miraculous interpositions of divine Providence,
 " as they suppose them to have been. Every cir-
 " cumstance is generally related with the most

* P. 252.

" scrupulous

“ scrupulous exactness; and the narrative is
 “ heightened with all the colouring, which the facts
 “ will possibly bear, that the picture may possess
 “ as large a portion of the marvellous, as the
 “ truth, sometimes, especially in verbal represen-
 “ tations, aided by a slight tincture of hyperbole,
 “ will allow. There is a strong propensity in the
 “ human mind to excite wonder and astonishment,
 “ when we are relating what concerns ourselves
 “ and our connections; and the Methodists have
 “ come in for their full share of this disposition *,”

I remain, &c.

LETTER X.

UNREASONABLE PRAYERS. PRESUMPTUOUS
 PRAYERS.

MY DEAR SIR,

AGREEABLE to the fantastic notion of
 their being objects of the special and extraordinary

* Portraiture, p. 17.

interposition of divine Providence, is their practice of PRAYING FOR EXTRAORDINARY GUIDANCE ON OCCASIONS, WHICH ARE WARRANTED NEITHER BY REASON NOR BY SCRIPTURE.

The following is a striking example of tempting God by prayer in a case, wherein those assistants, which he hath graciously bestowed for the general regulation of human conduct, would have been sufficient, and wherein therefore to pray for farther assistance was unreasonable.

In Mr. Wesley's second Journal, a person describes his call in the following words. "Doubting what I ought to do, I went into a neighbouring wood, and going into a little cave, I fell on my face and prayed, Lord, if it be thy will that I should leave my wife and children, I am ready: only show me thy will. Immediately I heard a loud voice, saying, Go on, Go on. I rose joyful and satisfied; went home and told my wife, it was God's will that I should now leave her. I went out of the door, and in that moment was filled with peace, joy, and comfort*."

This will probably bring to your mind the prayer of the famous Deist, my Lord Herbert of

* See Nott's Bamp. Lect. p. 230, n.

Cherbury,

Cherbury, requesting a sign from heaven to determine whether he should publish his book *de Veritate*; and the loud, though yet gentle noise which, he says, came forth from the heavens; and which did so cheer and comfort him, that he took his petition as granted, and that he had the sign he demanded *."

But this by the way. The folly of the Puritan petitioner in the following prayer was of a piece with that of the Methodist in the foregoing: though it does not appear that his enthusiasm induced him to believe that his prayer was answered, or led him into any act of guilt. "O my good Lord, I this
 "night desire thy counsel in behalf of Roger
 "Horsteede of Hengreave. Thou, Lord, knowest
 "whether it be better for him to live a single life;
 "or to marry the first woman that was propounded
 "to him, w th whom he has been thrice, who loves
 "him well; or to accept of the second maid prof-
 "fered him which is farther off, whom he hath
 "only seen once, she having carnal friends and
 "more beauty and more pleasing behaviour than
 "the former who hath godly friends. Yet at this
 "instant I know neither of these, nor any of their
 "friends by name or face. Lord, I desire thy
 "special counsel, which I shall advise him unto,

* Leland's Deistical Writers, Vol. I. p. 27.

“ or to live as he is—Lord, let thy hand appear in
 “ the pitching of his heart upon that choice, which
 “ thou wouldst have him make : let thy Providence
 “ appear in his choice *.”

At the same time it may be farther observed, that the PRAYERS of each party are sometimes REMARKABLE FOR A PROPERTY, not very like that piety and humility, with which such a being as man should address that High and Lofty One, who inhabiteth Eternity.

Give me leave to lay before you two or three specimens from the prayers of the Puritans.

One man thus expostulates with his Creator :
 “ O Lord, Thou hast never given us a victory this
 “ long while for all our frequent fasting. What
 “ dost thou mean, O Lord, to fling into a ditch,
 “ and there to leave us †?” Another expresses himself in the following audacious terms : “ O God,
 “ O God, many are the hands, that are lift up
 “ against us ; but there is one God, it is thou
 “ thyself, O Father, who does more mischief than
 “ they all ‡.” And a third, having prophesied the recovery of Oliver Cromwell from the sickness of

* Hudibras, II. iii. 545.

† Ibid. I. ii. 603.

‡ Ibid.

which he died, thus remonstrates with God on the defeat of his Prophecy; "Thou hast lied unto us; " yea, Thou hast lied unto us *."

Arrogant as this language is, it very little, if at all, surpasses the apparent presumption and profaneness of that of Messrs. Wesley and Whitefield.

Hear how the former seems to defy the power and justice of God,

Doom, if thou canst, to endless pains,
And drive me from thy face †:

and how the latter challenges the assistance of God, whose high commission he says he is going to perform:

The day, the dreadful day's at hand,
In battle cover thou my head;
Past is thy word:—I here demand
And confident expect thine aid ‡.

Being not provided with the particular expressions, I moreover assert on the authority of Nott, who deserves the highest commendation for the Christian spirit, with which he has exposed their enormities, that on the occasion of their separation, "they

* Hud. III. ii. 220.

† Enthusiasm of Methodism, I. 35.

‡ Nott's Bamp. Lect. p. 345.

"accused

“accused God of having deceived them, in terms
 “both impious and unequivocal *.”

Such addresses to God, surely they cannot be called Prayers, are much in the same style with those quoted above from the Puritans. As to their arrogance and insolence, they seem to have adopted the advice of the rebellious Divine, “Gather upon God, and hold him to it as Jacob did; press him with his precepts, with his promises, with his hand, with his seal, with his oath, till we do *δυσωπειν*, as some Greek Fathers boldly speak; that is, if I may speak it reverently enough, put the Lord out of countenance, put him, as you would say, to the blush, unless we be masters of our requests †.” And as to their confidence, they appear to be on a footing with their forerunner, of whom it was observed, “That he pretended to have got such an interest in Christ, and such an exact knowledge of affairs above, that he could tell the people, that he had just before received an express from Jesus, upon such a business, and that the ink was scarce dry upon the paper ‡.”

Lest the application of these passages to the Methodists should appear an unwarrantable asper-

* Nott's Bamp. Lect. p. 248. † Hud. I. ii. 603. ‡ Ibid.

sion,

sion, I shelter myself under the authority of one, whose means of procuring information are unquestionable, and whose statement I know not there is reason to doubt. Describing the person, who presides at the weekly prayer-meetings of the Wesleyan Methodists, under the denomination of the Prayer-leader, Mr. Nightingale thus continues.

“ He then goes to prayer; extemporary of course.

“ He generally begins in a low solemn tone; as he

“ finds his heart warmed, or his passions fired, he

“ raises his voice, until, in some instances, a

“ prayer-leader will address the God of heaven, as

“ if he were deaf or on a journey, or would not

“ answer any other prayers but such as are loud

“ and boisterous. If the prayer-leader happen to

“ have a remarkably sonorous voice; if he be very

“ fluent of speech; if he have a good memory,

“ and can from that treasure bring forth things new

“ and old, by repeating a long string of real or

“ imaginary texts of Scripture; if his language in

“ prayer be more than ordinarily sweet, loving,

“ fiery, enthusiastical, and intoxicating; and, above

“ all, if he seem to be in habits of strict intimacy

“ with the Deity, and be able to manifest a

“ very familiar intercourse with Jesus Christ and

“ the Holy Ghost; in such cases, the free spirit

“ of devotion immediately runs from heart to

“ heart, as oil from vessel to vessel. I forbear to

“ relate the confusion, the tumult, the noise, and

“ uproar,

“uproar, which at these times disgrace the order,
 “and scandalize the exercise, of Christian wor-
 “ship*.”

I remain, &c.

LETTER XI.

DOCTRINES OF INSTANTANEOUS CONVERSION—
 ASSURANCE—PERFECTION—FAITH—PREDES-
 TINATION.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE conclusion of the last letter affords an easy introduction to this, in which we are to survey some proofs which our Sectaries conceive themselves to possess of their strict intimacy with the Deity. We will begin with their Doctrine of CONVERSION. For like the Puritans who pretended to tell when they were converted; in what place, in what year, in what month, in what day, about what hour of the day, they began to feel the

* Portraiture, &c. p. 166.

motions of the Spirit*, the Methodists profess to be born of God by an instantaneous work ; at once, and in a moment, like lightning.

“ My being born of God,” (says Mr. Wesley, who by the way experienced this change in Aldersgate street, London, on Wednesday, the 24th of May, 1738, about a quarter before nine in the evening †.) “ My being born of God was an instantaneous act, enabling me from that moment to be more than conqueror over those corruptions, which before I was always a slave to.—Very many persons changed in a moment; always suddenly as far as I have known ‡.

This persuasion is still in full force. “ I remember, says Mr. Nightingale, “ on the day of my conversion, which was the 18th of June, 1796, being extremely distressed on a religious account, and living a few miles distant from the place, where a class-meeting was held, I was induced to run, as if life and salvation depended thereon, through much rain to the meeting, all in my undress, because I had opened upon that passage, where our Lord tells his disciples, that they knew the truth, and that the truth should

* Hudibras, I. iii. 1156.

† Coke's Life, p. 158.

‡ Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. I. 41.

“ set them free. Had the meeting been at five
 “ times the distance; and had my good mother,
 “ who opposed or wished to moderate my youthful
 “ zeal, been much more averse to my going, than
 “ she was, nothing could have stopped me; so
 “ fully was I persuaded, that that very night and
 “ and at that very meeting, I should be set free
 “ from the pains of the new birth, and be born
 “ again of the Spirit of truth *.”

I might, if it were necessary, lay before you
 a multitude of examples: perhaps no one is more
 striking than the miraculous conversion (miraculous
 both in its temporal and in its spiritual effects) of
 one David Wright, which I have lately found re-
 ported in the Edinburgh Review, on the authority
 of the Evangelical Magazine. “ David Wright
 “ was a man with scrophulous legs, and atheistical
 “ principles: being with difficulty persuaded to
 “ hear one sermon from Mr. Coles, he limped to
 “ the church in extreme pain, and arrived there
 “ after great exertions; during church time he was
 “ entirely converted, walked home with the greatest
 “ ease, and never afterwards experienced the
 “ slightest return of scrofula or infidelity †.”

* Portraiture of Methodism, p. 450.

† Edin. Rev. No. xxii. p. 344.

Of the same character as this, is the doctrine of ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS AND SALVATION, which they maintain in common with the Puritans: of some of whom, that had been engaged in the murder of the King, Dr. South shrewdly remarked, "That so sure did they make of heaven, and so fully reckoned themselves in the high road thither, that they never so much as thought that their Saintships should take Tyburn in the way*."

There is no point of doctrine, on which, presumptuous as it seems, the Methodists are more positive than on this. Not only did Mr. Wesley feel Faith in Christ, and an assurance (to use his own words) "that Christ had taken away my sins, even mine †:" Not only did Mr. Whitefield feel "assured that God had forgiven him, and know numbers whose salvation was written on their hearts, as it were with a sun-beam ‡:" but they pronounced such a confident assurance a certain mark of grace, and the want of it a certain mark of damnation. Mr. Seward is so charitable as to "wish all persons mad, who are not assured of forgiveness." Mr. Whitefield says, "it is a dreadful mistake to deny

* Hudibras, III. ii. 995.

† Coke's Life, p. 158.

‡ Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. I. 43.

“ the doctrine of assurances, and that assurance
 “ of eternal salvation is one of the privileges of
 “ Christ’s followers.” And Mr. Wesley has
 taken care to push the doctrine home. For besides
 his writings, we are told on unexceptionable authority,
 that we may depend upon the following story: and no doubt
 (it is added) but his practice has been the same in other
 places. “ A sensible
 “ honest woman told the Bishop of Exeter, in
 “ presence of several witnesses, that Mr. J.
 “ Wesley came to her house and questioned her,
 “ whether she had an assurance of her salvation?
 “ Her answer was, that she hoped she should be
 “ saved, but had no absolute assurance of it.
 “ Why then, replied he, you are in hell; you are
 “ damned already*.”

Connected with this is another favourite doctrine
 of the Methodists, that believers may attain to
 PERFECTION in this life, so as to be absolutely
 freed from the dominion of sin†.”

However unscriptural this doctrine is, the original
 founders of the sect may undoubtedly be acquitted
 of any evil intention in propagating it. Let us see
 however the shape which it assumes in the

* Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. III. 5.

† Nott, p. 242.

mouths of their followers. A man who had once been in the habit of attending their meetings, voluntarily made oath to several particulars in their practice, and among others to the following: "That he
 " had frequently heard several of the preachers,
 " two of whom he mentions by name, assert, that
 " after they have received the Spirit, they cannot
 " sin; and if they commit any sin, it is only an
 " error in such: and let them do whatever they
 " please after their adoption, however sinful the
 " act is, they are sure to be saved notwithstanding*."

It is totally unnecessary for me to say a word to you, my dear Sir, about the dangerous and pernicious tendency of this doctrine; or of that other puritanical tenet, which the Methodists are fond of inculcating, about the necessity of FAITH ALONE to salvation; to the exclusion, if not to the condemnation, of morality and good works: for indeed so little do they seem to care for practical righteousness, as to acquit us of much exaggeration, if we apply to them the description, in this particular too, of the rebellious Saints, who

— made Morality a crime,
 The most notorious of the time †.

* Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. III. xxx.

† Hudibras, III. i. 1289.

Without insisting then upon the dangers of these doctrines, it will be sufficient if I shortly mention where the cream of them is to be found. "The
 " Saints in the Great Rebellion took themselves, or
 " pretended to do so, to be the only elect or chosen
 " ones: they might drink and whore and revel
 " and do what they pleased. God saw no sin in
 " them, though these were damnable sins in others.

" To sum up all he would aver,
 " And prove a Saint could never err:
 " And that let Saints do what they will,
 " Yet Saints are Saints and were so still *.

Of the gloomy doctrine of CALVINISTIC PRE-
 DESTINATION the Wesleyan Methodists are quit.
 But as it is professed by a very numerous body of
 their fellows in separation from the Church, it may
 be well to say two or three words of it in this place:
 for I do not know that it appears any where more
 impious and dangerous than in its connection with
 the subject before us. I shall therefore trespass on
 your patience, while I transcribe two passages, in
 which the authors do not scruple to avow their
 belief in the necessary consequences of Predestina-
 tion; although I suspect that some of our modern
 Predestinarians are not hardy enough to abide by
 what follows of course from their fundamental
 tenet.

* Hudibras, I. ii. 1010.

" Let

“ Let any true Saint of God,” says Mr. Pryn,
 “ be taken away in the very act of sin, before ’tis
 “ possible for him to repent; I make no doubt or
 “ scruple of it, but he shall as surely be saved, as
 “ if he had lived to have repented of it. I say,
 “ that whenever God doth take away any of the
 “ Saints, in the very act of sin, he doth in that
 “ very instant give them such a particular and
 “ actual repentance, as shall save their souls.
 “ For he hath predestinated them to everlasting
 “ life: therefore having predestinated them to the
 “ end; he doth predestinate to the means to obtain
 “ it.” And it is the declaration of another, that
 “ the child of God, in the power of Grace, doth
 “ perform every duty so well, that to ask pardon
 “ for failing either in matter or in manner, is a
 “ sin: it is unlawful to pray for forgiveness of sins
 “ after conversion; and if he does at any time
 “ fall, he can by the power of grace carry his sin
 “ to the Lord, and say, Here I had it, and here I
 “ leave it*.”

* Hudibras, II. ii. 245.

LETTER XII.

PECULIAR MANNERS—MOST PREVAILING SINS
CONCLUSION.

MY DEAR SIR,

WHETHER the generality of the Methodists are more free from sin than their neighbours is not for me to determine: like “the good old Puritans *,” as they are denominated by the biographer of Mr. Whitefield, they call themselves saints, the elect, the dear people, the people of God; and they assume a sanctified appearance by a demure look; precise behaviour in discourse or silence; apparel and food; and other marks of external piety.

To be a little more particular with their PECULIARITIES: Like their predecessors, of whom the Spectator remarks, “That those swarms of Sectaries, that overran the nation at the time of the Great Rebellion, carried their hypocrisy so high, that they had converted our whole language into

* Gillies’s Life of Whitefield, p. 49.

“ a jargon

“ a jargon of enthusiasm *; they affect a fantastical cant, exult in their awakenings and buffetings and experiences; praise God for anointing the wheels of their souls; and term their societies dear precious innocent lambs, babes and weaklings of grace, dandled upon the knees of Christ, leaning upon his bosom, and sucking the breasts of his consolation †. They consider dancing to be a practice utterly opposed to the whole spirit and temper of Christianity ‡, and they abominate dancing assemblies and play-houses as the devil's strongest holds †. They think that card-playing is so offensive to God, as to call occasionally for his interference in summoning those that are guilty of it, from the card table to the bar of God §. They seem to rank laughter among the mortal sins ||. They condemn what are commonly called innocent relaxations and diversions, which in their judgment are contrary to the whole tenour of the gospel, and show that the heart is wholly alienated from the life of God †. They do not indeed intitle themselves, by the treatment of their hair, to the appellation of Round-heads, but they deem it a proof of excellence to wear no hair-powder or artificial curls, or other

* No. 458.

† Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. II. 6. I. 19, 28.

‡ Edinb. Review, XXII. 349.

§ Ibid. 344.

|| Hampson's Life of Wesley, III. 178.

needless ornament, such as rings, ear rings, necklaces, laces, or ruffles *. And although I am not aware that, like their predecessors, they have any quarrel with mince-pies or plum-porridge †, they certainly have vowed open hostility against snuff and tobacco ‡.

I am sure you will concur with me in approving the remark of Bp. Lavington on this head. "Our love of recreations and diversions," he observes, "has indeed confessedly exceeded all bounds, and calls loudly for some redress. But to break out wildly against every instance and degree of them, is the direct way to render our complaints fruitless and ridiculous. It has neither reason nor scripture to support it. But moderation, reason, and scripture are things unregarded by enthusiasts, who must act in character. They cannot, they dare not allow any thing, that carries the name or face of relaxation or cheerfulness; for fear of dispersing a little of that black bile, that gloomy humour, which is the most essential ingredient in their religion §."

You will here probably call to mind, what bears on this subject of the affected saintship of the Me-

* Myles's Hist. p. 27, and 121.

† Hudibras, I. i. 227.

‡ Myles, p. 27, and 89.

§ Enthusiasm of Methodists, &c. I. 23.

thodists,

thodists, the reply made by a cavalier to one of General Fairfax's officers, who was vaunting of the sanctity of their army and the negligence of the cavaliers. "Faith," says he, "you say true; for
 "in our army we have the sins of men, drinking
 "and wenching: but in your's you have those of
 "devils; spiritual pride and rebellion *."

I do not presume to say that the Methodists are quite quit of the sins of men; of one of the two indeed, specified above, they are by no means guiltless, unless they have been grossly belied: but I do think that BY THE OTHER DIVISION OF SINS THEY ARE DISMALLY BESET; insubordination, spiritual pride, falshood, calumny, a persecuting and tyrannical spirit towards their own members, and intolerance towards all others. Thus the Puritans were said to be "more lordly than Bishops, "and in their parishes more tyrannical than the "Grand Turk †;" and honest Anthony Wood tells us, that "the godly faction endeavoured to bring "the nation into confusion by their usual trade of "lying and slandering, which they have always "hitherto done to carry on their ends. Such is the "Religion of the Saints ‡."

* Hud. III. i. 1301.

† Ib. I. iii. 1203.

‡ Athen. Oxon. Vol. II. C. 1154.

Part of this charge, as it affects the Methodists, I apprehend to be substantiated by some of the foregoing statements; I mean that which relates to their insubordination and spiritual pride, which indeed are essential principles of their schism. With respect to the remainder, I beg to lay before you two or three passages, which may convince you that it is not vaguely alleged against them.

Having quoted a warning given by Mr. Wesley to his people, in consequence of former abuses, against that hateful custom of painting things beyond life, Mr. Nightingale continues, " On this advice Dr. Whitehead makes the following very just and necessary observations. It is to be greatly lamented, that some few of the preachers have not given more attention to this caution, and to some others Mr. Wesley has left on record concerning evil-speaking, than they seem to have done." To which Mr. Nightingale adds, upon his own authority, " That some of the Methodist preachers do still deal pretty largely in amplification, when speaking concerning the success of their labours, is very certain. I could produce some shameful instances of this species of pious fraud. Of evil-speaking I believe it may be fairly said, that it is the great besetting sin of Methodism. Certainly there are few professing Christians, so much guilty of slander and back-

“ back-biting as these people. They exercise this
 “ disagreeable propensity, even against their own
 “ friends: what then have those to expect, whom
 “ they regard as their enemies *.”

With respect to their persecuting and domineering spirit, the same writer asserts, “ I know that
 “ to call in question any of their doctrines, or to
 “ dispute the validity of any part of their discipline,
 “ is a sure ground of excommunication. Nay, the
 “ very last conference (1806,) they expelled one of
 “ the travelling preachers, for holding some opinions concerning justification by faith and the
 “ witness of the spirit, which the Conference thought
 “ were Anti-Methodistical; but which the expelled
 “ preacher has since attempted to prove, are strictly
 “ agreeable to the doctrines taught by Wesley and
 “ Fletcher.

“ Whatever the Society of Methodists may require of candidates at their admission, it is certain, that having once entered, it is expected they
 “ will not vary one jot or tittle from the true Methodistical creed. Else why is it, that the trust
 “ deeds of the chapels have a clause in them, requiring all the preachers to preach only such
 “ doctrines as are laid down in Wesley's Sermons

* Portraiture of Methodism, p. 338.

“ and

“ and Fletcher’s Checks. Nay, if any private
 “ member should broach any other faith than their’s,
 “ expulsion from the society would infallibly be the
 “ consequence! What confidence then are we to
 “ place in their boasting professions of liberality?
 “ Truly it may be said of them, That all is false
 “ and hollow.*”

And he afterwards gives a particular proof of his opinion, in a controversy among them, which discloses, he says, “ such a spirit of rancour and
 “ hatred, as the religious world has seldom seen.
 “ The victorious party branded their opponent as
 “ a heretic, a leveller, a jacobin, a rebel;—they
 “ likened him to the devil—they consigned him to
 “ hell—they made some feeble efforts to raise the
 “ secular arm against him and his adherents—and
 “ they finally expelled him the connection! A
 “ more glaring instance of persecution is perhaps
 “ not to be found in the annals of modern sectarian
 “ bigotry †.”

With respect to their intolerance towards those not of their communion, one or two instances of it have already passed before us. To these I add, Mr. Wesley himself “ breaking forth into a
 “ strain of violent invective against a class of re-

* P. 409.

† P. 473, 482.

“ligionists, whom he characterises as the fierce,
 “unclean, brutish, blasphemous Antinomians * :”
 Dr. Coke, declaring that “the Lord Jesus Christ
 “vomited forth Arianism, which ran like a stream
 “into the gulph of hell † :” and another of their
 celebrated preachers, publicly asserting not long
 ago, “that a certain character was a devil in the
 “shape of a man, like a sponge dipped in the
 “devil’s lake, and squeezed in wrath over the guilty
 “nations; and that Socinians are not only con-
 “demned sinners, but damned-fools ! and that they
 “are as certain of being damned in hell, as if they
 “were already there †.”

“What,” demands the Author above-mentioned,
 on whose authority the two last facts are stated,
 “What ought we to think of the piety of men, who
 “can thus transfer the language of the tap-room
 “to the pulpit?—Surely their zeal is composed of
 “the rankest bigotry; their sanctity is the most
 “disgusting grimace; and their pretended holiness
 “is founded on the very worst species of hypocrisy.”
 This sentence I submit to your consideration.

And thus, my dear Sir, I have exhibited to your
 view several particulars of resemblance between the

* Life by Hampson, II. 98.

† Nightingale, p. 330.

Puritans and the Methodists. I trust that I have not made any statement without the warrant of sufficient authority, which in every instance I have carefully, perhaps in some instances tediously, quoted: and that I have not been guilty, either in the design or in the execution, of any breach of Christian Charity. With respect to the design, I consider myself to be engaged in a defensive warfare, as a member and Minister of the Church, of which I conceive the Methodists to be assailants: and for the execution, I have employed no angry invective, but have put together what is little more than a plain collection of facts.

Much more, I believe, might easily be added: and those particulars, which I have noticed, might easily receive more ample illustration from any one, who had more leisure and more opportunities for prosecuting the inquiry, than at present fall to my share. I apprehend, however, that the likeness, which I have traced, is sufficiently striking; and that it must appear to any fair observer, not to be the creature of the painter's pencil, but really to exist in nature.

If this be so, there are some alarming reflections, resulting from the comparison, to which it would be presumptuous in me to pretend to direct your attention. The numbers of the Methodists, which,

etc

ever since their original establishment, have continually increased, and are continually increasing; and which at present amount to a very great and very formidable sum:—their attachment and devotion to their own cause:—their union and hostility against the Ministers of the establishment, and their antipathy to its forms and ceremonies:—their ignorance and bigotry, and their confidence withal, either real or pretended, that they are patronized by the favour and protected by the arm of heaven:—their peculiar doctrines, which are calculated above all things to raise men in their own estimations, and to induce them to look scornfully upon others:—their peculiarity of manners and affected holiness:—their spiritual pride and insubordination, and their calumnious, intolerant, and overbearing spirit:—all these characteristics of the Methodists, which have been detailed and substantiated in the foregoing letters, cannot but suggest matter of apprehension to any considerate man, who bears in mind, that these were also characteristics of those persons, whom a panegyrist of the schism boldly denominates “the good old Puritans;” and that to those Puritans we were indebted in former times for the murder of our King, the overthrow of our monarchy, the dissolution of our civil constitution, and the abolition of our ecclesiastical establishment.

I beg

I beg pardon if I have tediously or unprofitably
intruded upon your time ; and remain,

My dear Sir,

Very faithfully your's, &c.

FINIS.

